

Reading Standard

Articulated by Grade Level

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex skill that involves learning language and using it effectively in the active process of constructing meaning embedded in text. It requires students to fluently decode the words on a page, understand the vocabulary of the writer, and use strategies to build comprehension of the text. It is a vital form of communication in the 21st century and a critical skill for students of this “information age” as they learn to synthesize a vast array of texts.

The Reading Standard Articulated by Grade Level will provide a clear delineation of what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level. This allows teachers to better plan instructional goals for students at any grade.

BACKGROUND

The state Board of Education adopted the Arizona Academic Standards in 1996 to define what Arizona’s students need to know and be able to do by the end of twelfth grade. Developed by committees comprised of educators, parents, students, and business and community leaders, these standards were written in grade-level clusters with benchmarks at grades 3, 5, 8, and high school.

RATIONALE

Requirements in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) and the standard practice of conducting periodic review of the state academic standards prompted the decision by the Arizona Department of Education to refine and articulate the academic standards for mathematics and reading by grade level. This

refinement and articulation project was started in July 2002, and was completed in March 2003.

METHODOLOGY

Work teams for reading consisted of a representative sample of educators from around the state designed to include large and small schools, rural and urban schools, and ethnic diversity. National reading consultants, university professors, and test company consultants advised the teams. The goal was to articulate, or align, the current academic standards by grade level (K-12).

The Reading Articulation Teams utilized information from the National Council of Teachers of English and the findings of the National Reading Panel, which promote quality instruction, based on current, pedagogical, and researched practices.

The articulation process included a restructuring of the Arizona Academic Content Standards to better facilitate the alignment of performance objectives by grade level, while maintaining the content integrity of the existing standards. Over a period of months, the articulation team and smaller sub-committees of the teams refined the documents. Reasonableness, usefulness, and appropriateness were the guidelines for the articulation process.

External reviews by nationally recognized consultants brought a broad perspective to the articulation process. Internal reviews by university and local experts provided additional validation.

Another important step in the project was the request for public comment. In December 2002, drafts of the Standards

Articulated by Grade Level, along with a survey to gather feedback, were posted on the Arizona Department of Education website. This provided the public with easy access to the documents, and the survey allowed reviewers a means for submitting comments. The public and all educators had the opportunity to submit comments and suggestions, either electronically or in writing, until the survey closing date of January 31, 2003. In January, six public hearings were held throughout the state, offering further opportunities for public input.

After all the public comments were collected and organized by topic, the articulated teams met one last time to determine what modifications to the standards documents would be appropriate, based on this information. All public comments were given equal consideration.

The completion of the standards articulation process was followed by the development of rationales, glossaries, and crosswalks. These additional documents were designed to assist educators with the transition from the 1996 standards to the Reading Standard Articulated by Grade Level.

ORGANIZATION OF THE READING STANDARD

The Reading Standard is divided into three strands: Reading Process, Comprehending Literary Text, and Comprehending Informational Text. Each strand is divided into concepts that broadly define the skills and knowledge that students are expected to know and be able to do. Under each concept are performance objectives that more specifically delineate the tasks to be taught and learned.

The way the Reading Standard is organized does not imply that teaching and learning of reading should be fragmented or compartmentalized. The order of the strands, concepts, and performance objectives are not intended to be a progression or hierarchy of literacy instruction. Reading develops with a spiraling of skills that are interconnected and dependent on each other, which is reflected in the standard. Effective instruction often incorporates several performance objectives into an integrated experience of learning for the student.

Due to the nature of the content, some performance objectives are repeated in subsequent grade levels. It is understood that the complexity, depth, and difficulty of the performance objective's content will increase from one grade level to the next.

It is recommended that educators view the Reading Standard as a continuum across all grade levels. Therefore, the Reading Standard format is designed to allow educators easy access to the performance objectives of preceding and proceeding grade levels in addition to the level at which they are instructing.

Strand One: Reading Process

Recent research has established the major components of effective reading instruction. They are identified in the six concepts of this strand, each supported with specific performance objectives. While different skills will be emphasized at different stages of a student's reading development, all components are needed and used by fluent readers as they interact with text.

Concept 1: Print Concepts

These skills establish an awareness of the organization of our written language as students learn to access print in the early stages of reading development. Specific skills include demonstrating correct directional behavior, from opening a book to following the text, recognizing distinguishing features of a sentence, such as end punctuation and alphabetizing a list of words.

Concept 2: Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic Awareness is the knowledge of the individual speech sounds in spoken words and the ability to manipulate those sounds. Instructional time spent isolating the sounds in spoken language, and then putting them back together into a complete word, enables students to work from the familiar, (sounds) to the unknown, (letters).

Concept 3: Phonics

Phonics is the understanding of the symbol-sound relationship in written language. Students learn that there are predictable

connections between the sounds or phonemes that are spoken, and the letters or graphemes that are written. This knowledge is important as students begin to decode unfamiliar words in text.

Concept 4: Vocabulary

Readers who develop a rich and varied repertoire of word meanings have a greater capacity for understanding the text they read. Reading vocabulary refers specifically to words readers recognize or use in print. Students learn vocabulary by direct instruction, and also indirectly through experiences in listening to read alouds and in reading on their own.

Concept 5: Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read a text with automaticity, accuracy, and expression to support comprehension. Fluency is a critical bridge between decoding and comprehension. Once a reader is able to access the printed words with confidence, he or she can better concentrate on reading for understanding.

Concept 6: Comprehension

Understanding the meaning embedded in text is the fundamental reason for reading. Good readers establish a purpose for reading and actively monitor their comprehension to accomplish their goal. They adjust the speed of their reading to accommodate challenging text, resolve comprehension problems while they're reading, and check for understanding when they are finished. Good readers consciously use comprehension strategies to make sense of what they have read.

Strand 2: Comprehending Literary Text

This strand focuses on comprehension of fiction, including literature, poetry, and drama, and their historical and cultural contexts.

Concept 1: Elements of Literature

Comprehension elements in this concept address higher level thinking skills. This concept addresses the structure and elements of text such as plot, characters and theme, but also analyze, interpret, conclude and draw inferences. In this strand, students are expected to identify, analyze and interpret a variety of genres, relating them to their own experience and knowledge.

Concept 2: Historical and Cultural Aspects of Literature

This concept recognizes that comprehension of literary text is enhanced by an informed awareness of global issues and cultures. Literature that crosses cultural and national boundaries offers an excellent experience for students to broaden their horizons and understanding. Learning about the historical impact of an issue or incident allows today's students to make connections to the past and understand the present.

Stand 3: Comprehending Informational Text

The comprehension skills particular to informational text can be taught across all content areas. Students need the opportunity to learn and practice these skills with the reading material they are required to read in various subject areas. It is important that students have the opportunity to read and understand real-world text in order to apply these skills to their personal or workplace tasks.

Concept 1: Expository Text

Expository text, such as encyclopedias, articles, textbooks and reference sources, provides organized information and explanations. Students need to be able to use, interpret, and analyze expository text to locate information for school or personal use.

Concept 2: Functional Text.

Functional text, such as maps, schedules, forms and workplace manuals conveys information. Students need to be able to use, interpret, and analyze functional text in order to perform everyday practical tasks.

Concept 3: Persuasive Text

Persuasive text, such as in editorial essays, reviews or critiques is written to sway or impress the reader. Students need to carefully read and analyze persuasive text in order to determine that the information in the text is accurate and unbiased.